

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ELAB, NI, EK

SUBJECT: FMG TERMINATES LABOR RECRUITMENT
FOR EQUATORIAL GUINEA

REF: (A) LAGOS 5785, JULY 18, 1973

(B) LAGOS A-54, MARCH 26, 1974 NOTAL

SUMMARY: FMG ANNOUNCED MAY 29 IT HAS OFFICIALLY
TERMINATED EXPORTATION NIGERIAN LABORERS TO
EQUATORIAL GUINEA, AND DOES NOT PLAN RENEW 1971
AGREEMENT ON THESE LABORERS. RETURN OF THESE
LABORERS COULD CAUSE FURTHER UNEMPLOYMENT IN
EASTERN AREAS BUT NATIONAL PRIDE SEEMS TO BE
OVER-RULING ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS, COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION
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AND LABOR ENAHORO TOLD NEWSMEN IN MAY 29 AIRPORT

INTERVIEW THAT FMG HAS OFFICIALLY TERMINATED FURTHER EXPORTATION OF NIGERIAN LABOR TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA. DECISION REPORTEDLY IS RESULT OF ENAHORO'S ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENT MADE LAST YEAR OF WORKING CONDITIONS OF NIGERIANS IN E.G. MINISTRY OF LABOR SOURCE CONFIRMS THAT FMG DOES NOT PLAN TO RENEW 1971 FMG/GOEG AGREEMENT COVERING RECRUITMENT AND TREATMENT OF NIGERIAN LABORERS IN E. G.

2. TREATMENT OF NIGERIANS HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SPORADIC PRESS INTEREST SINCE FMG SUSPENDED RECRUITMENT OF LABORERS LAST JULY. SUBJECT ATTRACTED RENEWED INTEREST RECENTLY WHEN NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO E. G. BRIGADIER W. U. BASSEY, WHILE ON LEAVE, REPORTEDLY INFORMED PRESS NIGERIAN LABORERS WERE STILL BEING MISTREATED AND WERE EAGER TO RETURN HOME. HE TERMED NECESSITY OF REPATRIATING THESE WORKERS AN URGENT MATTER, AND STATED FMG SHOULD SEND CARGO BOATS AND PLANES TO RETRIEVE THESE "DESPERATE" NIGERIANS. NUMBER OF EDITORIALS AND NEWS STORIES IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE REHASHED STORIES OF ILL-TREATMENT AND VICTIMIZATIONS OF NIGERIANS BY GOEG OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYERS. MAJORITY OF EDITORIAL COMMENTS MADE EMOTIONAL CALLS ON FMG TO REPATRIATE NIGERIANS FROM "SLAVERY" IN E. G.

3. EAST-CENTRAL STATE NEWSPAPER RENAISSANCE, IN JUNE 1 EDITORIAL, TAKES DIFFERENT STANCE ON PROBLEM BY HIGHLIGHTING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS REPATIRATES WILL FACE IF AND WHEN THE RETURN HOME. RENAISSANCE NOTES " RETURNEES" WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES ONCE PUBLICITY HAS FADED, AND WOULD ONLY ADD TO UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS IN THREE EASTERN STATES (WHERE MOST OF THEM ORIGINALLY COME FROM). EDITORIAL CALLS ON FMG, WHICH EDITORIAL SAYS SHARES MEASURE OF BLAME FOR GOEG FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT 1971 AGREEMENT, TO SHOW ITS "WILL" TO ENSURE THAT AGREEMENTS, ONCE REACHED, ARE OBSERVED. IT ENDS BY NOTING IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CLOSE WAY TO FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF NIGERIANS IN E. G.

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4. CHIEF ENAHORO, IN HIS PRESS COMMENT, NOTED SOME NIGERIANS HAVE PLACED FMG IN A "DIFFICULT SITUATION BY STOWING AWAY" TO REACH E.G., DESPITE KNOWN BAD WORKING CONDITIONS.

5. COMMENT: NATIONAL PRIDE SEEMS MORE EASILY TO OVER-RULE ECONOMIC NECESSITY THE FURTHER ONE IS FROM

THE SITUATION. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THREE EASTERN STATES
IS REPORTEDLY SERIOUS PROBLEM, AND SUDDEN REPATRIATION
OF SEVERAL THOUSAND NIGERIANS WORKING IN E.G., AND
THEIR FAMILIES, WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE ECONOMIC
BURDEN FOR THESE THREE STATE GOVERNMENTS. RELATIONS
BETWEEN FMG AND GOEG HAVE BEEN STRAINED BY CONTROVERSY
OVER THESE WORKERS, AND FMG APPEARS TO WISH TO
AVOID MAKING SITUATION ANY MORE DIFFICULT THAN
NECESSARY. FOR EXAMPLE, FMG SAYS IT WILL NOT RELEASE
ENAHORO'S REPORT ON WHICH LATEST DECISION IS BASED,
PERHAPS TO KEEP FROM FURTHER UPSETTING GOEG. TO
EASE TRANSITION FOR BOTH EASTERN STATES AND GOEG,
FMG MAY DECIDE TO REPATRIATE NIGERIAN LABOR FORCE
ONLY AS THEIR CONTRACTS EXPIRE, THEREBY PHASING
OUT WORK FORCE OVER LONGER PERIOD OF TIME.
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